



# The Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition Planning Initiative



## What is the Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition planning effort?

- The Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition planning effort was formed in 2012 to begin construction of an Age Wave Plan for the County, in response to the regional Age Wave Plan, by Sarah Snead, Deputy County Administrator for Human Services.
- The team initially analyzed the efforts of the regional Age Wave Readiness Plan and reviewed past needs assessments provided by the Chesterfield Council on Aging and the Disability Services Board.
- The team's objective is to develop a Chesterfield County plan specific to the needs and opportunities for our community, while still operating in cooperation with the surrounding localities and agencies, both private and public. A guiding principle of the Chesterfield County effort is the only way to achieve success in preparing the entire community, is for this to be a community solution.
- The Chesterfield Coalition has representatives from county departments (Social Services, Mental Health/CSB, Planning, Libraries, Parks and Recreation, Senior Advocate, Center for Organizational Excellence, Special Projects Manager/Human Services, Human Resource Management, Police Department, Fire/EMS Community Paramedics), community volunteers (nurse and former Health Department employee, community volunteer and disability advocate), a representative from HCA, and a representative from the regional Age Wave Coalition.
- Government is not the solution to addressing the gaps in services or resources, but it can educate and inform the community of what's needed, be a catalyst for change and be instrumental in bring critical partners to the table.

## What's the opportunity?

- According to the Virginia Employment Commission, by 2030, Chesterfield is expected to have 79,772 residents over the age of 65, meaning there are over 79,000 reasons why we should care. For the first time in the history of Chesterfield County, the number of seniors over the age of 60 years will outnumber the school-age children. Our community must prepare to meet the needs for the new opportunities and challenges that come with this demographic shift known as the Age Wave.
- From adequate jobs to affordable housing, from accessible health care to accessible transportation, the need for greater support and resources for older adults exist now. This need will only increase with time.
- We can provide outlets for people starting a second career, volunteer opportunities (this group of people is our largest volunteer population), engagement opportunities and caregiver education, to name a few.

## Why is it important?

- Older adults represent the fastest growing population in the community (Boomers born between 1946 and 1964). Our community will experience increasing demands for supportive services, health care choices, and lifestyle options that promote independence and safety. The aging Boomer population will impact our community extensively in the areas of retirement and the workforce, health and well-being, civic engagement, housing, transportation, community design, and financial stability.

- The population change will need a high degree of community adjustment in its policies, resources, community involvement, volunteerism, inter-generational interdependence and a reliance on the community to create solutions on how to best make meaningful contributions to these changes.
- In order to build a strong community, we need people of all ages to be engaged, healthy citizens. That is why the Age Wave affects us all.

### **What are we doing about it?**

- Through the Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition planning effort, the team has been analyzing the efforts of Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging and the Gerontology Department at Virginia Commonwealth University. Community partners include the United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg, the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission and other community partners from the greater Richmond region that developed the Age Wave Readiness plan. This plan identifies the significant impact of the increasing age of the citizens of the region by the year 2030 and opportunities for local government to lead and engage the community in change.
- The team's objective is to develop a Chesterfield County plan specific to the needs and opportunities for our community while still operating in cooperation with the surrounding localities and agencies, both private and public.
- The goal of the Chesterfield County Plan is to establish age wave ready communities that are engaged, livable, stable and well across all ages and generations.
- The Coalition will facilitate focus group across the county in September and October to learn directly from local residents.

### **How will the Plan be used?**

- Integrated planning is critical to ensure that Chesterfield County is ready for the challenges and opportunities presented by the Age Wave. The Plan provides a framework and guidance to encourage the public and private sectors to work toward a common goal.

An Age Wave ready Chesterfield County emphasizes an engaged community that is aware of the needs of the community across all ages and invested in developing accessible resources to meet and demonstrate optimum participation in County resources and activities. We are not the solution. We are responsible in our effort to engage the community to fill in the gaps, leading and directing the community where we see gaps in services. Government is part of the solution, but not the solution. We are the main piece of the puzzle in leading the solution by bringing people to the table, together finding the solution.